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ABSTRACT

This paper reports on a study conducted to assist the Wadsworth Public Library in future planning and refining of services to older adults especially in library outreach. A questionnaire was distributed to residents (n=350) of one nursing home, four apartment complexes for seniors, one assisted living complex, one senior center, and any patrons already receiving home delivery book service from the outreach librarian. The questionnaire distributed was designed to make the older adults aware of the services now provided by the library; to discover which of those services were being used and why; to be aware of what types of books, video cassettes, and audio cassettes older adults like; to discover how the outreach staff of the library are regarded by the older adults; and to find out what other outreach services the older adults want. The return rate was 18% (68). Findings are discussed and presented in 15 tables. The top fiction preferences for women were: romance, 27%, mystery, 26%; and historical fiction, 23%. The top non-fiction preferences for women were: biography, 20%; history, 18%; and travel, 16%. Top fiction preferences for men were: western fiction, 29%; mystery, 29%; and historical fiction and romance, 19%. The romance was a surprise. The top non-fiction preferences for men were: travel, 24%; fine arts, 12%; and biography, 12%. Two versions of the cover letter and a copy of the three-page questionnaire are appended. Contains 21 references. (Author/DLS)

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OUTREACH SERVICES FOR OLDER ADULTS AT THE WADSWORTH PUBLIC LIBRARY

ED 423 902

A Master's Research Paper submitted to the Kent State University School of Library and Information Science in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree Master of Library Science

by

Barbara A. Black

July 15, 1998

IR057204

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study was to assist the Wadsworth Public Library in future planning and refining of services to older adults especially in library outreach. The questionnaire distributed was designed to make the older adults aware of the services now provided by the library, to discover which of those services were being used and why, to be aware of what types of books, video cassettes and audio cassettes older adults like, to discover how the outreach staff of the library are regarded by the older adults and to find out what other outreach services the older adults want. It was concluded that top reading preferences for women were romance, mystery and historical fiction and biography, history and travel non-fiction. The top reading preferences for men were western fiction, mystery romance and historical fiction and travel, fine arts and biography non-fiction. The book drops at the apartment complexes and nursing homes and home delivery are the most popular outreach services. Awareness of the outreach services has come primarily from friends and the library newsletter. The outreach staff is highly regarded and the most interest expressed for future services was increased outreach visits and book talks .

Master's Research Paper by

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CHAPTER 1

Outreach service is not a new idea to the library community. As early as the late seventeenth and early eighteenth centuries there are accounts of outreach programs. However, the recognition that older adults needed outreach services was slow in coming. The effort of the library to meet the needs of older adults really began at the Cleveland Public Library in the 1940s when the "Live Long and Like It Library Club" was developed for men and women over sixty. This was a study and discussion group that became so successful that the idea was adapted in other cities.

Advocacy for older adults began to grow in the United States, and by 1956 Congress had passed the first Library Services Act (LSA). The LSA, although it did not provide special funds for the elderly, recognized the need for libraries to expand and provide support and involvement in services to older adults in their communities. Between 1957 and 1961, the library world developed a lot of interest in serving the elderly as a result of making preparations for the First White House Conference on Aging which was held in January 1961. During this time the ALA expanded its Adult Education Board to a full division, the Adult Services Division, whose purpose was "to provide continuing educational, recreational, and cultural development for adults."[1] A permanent Committee on Library Service to the Aging Population was created within that division, and it was requested to assist and advise in completing a survey of library services to the elderly. Turock observes that "The results revealed that many libraries offered some special services to the aging, especially in supplying books, publicizing materials for the aging, providing services to the shut-ins and working with other agencies."[2]

By 1971, at the time of the Second White House Conference, the enthusiasm of the 1960s for improving library services to older adults had waned. In preparing for this conference, which actually had little impact for the library, there developed an awareness that again there was a need to study the responsibilities and service to older adults in the library. In 1971 and 1972 the Cleveland Studies were conducted under the joint auspices of the United States Office of Education and the Cleveland Public Library and were extensive studies of library services to older adults. The purpose of the first study was to determine the scope of library service given to persons over 65 by public libraries and libraries at state and federal institutions, while the second study had as its purpose to determine the state of program and services to the aging provided by public libraries with service area population exceeding 25,000. These studies, along with some follow-up studies in the 1980s, showed clearly that "library service to older adults has been and remains painfully inadequate.[3]

The Cleveland Studies, along with a study done by Elliot Kanner at the University of Wisconsin which showed the decline of citations to gerontology in library literature from 1962-1969 and a study by Kenneth Ferstl which showed that there was no significant difference between the attitudes of public librarians and the common stereotypes held by the American Public toward the aging, spurred some action by the library professionals.[4] As a result of these studies, the ALA established two forums - RASD's Library Service to an Aging Population and ASCLA's Library Service to the Impaired Elderly Forum. Older citizens were named a priority during the First White House conference on Library and Information Services in 1979.

When a look is taken at the results of the 1990 census and its analysis, it is evident that the library must continue its efforts on behalf of the older adults because their numbers are rapidly increasing. In The Atlas of the 1990 Census a comparison chart shows that from 1970 to 1989 the number of adults aged 55-59 years had increased by 747,000; the number of adults aged 60-64 increased by 2,244,000; the number of adults aged 65-74 years increased by 5,739,000 and the number of adults aged 75 and over increased by 5,272,000.[5] In the 1998 Statistical Abstract, it is reported that the life expectancy in 1980 was 73.7, in 1990 it was 75.4 and in 1996 it had risen to 76.1[6] This tells us that there are, and probably will continue to be, an increased number of older adults who will need library service. Because of the increase in the life expectancy, it is feasible that some of those older adults will need library service in their own homes or in a nursing care facility. In other words, they will need library outreach services.

The Wadsworth Public Library followed the national pattern in regard to addressing the library needs of the older adults when, in the late 1970s, it began its outreach service to older adults by showing movies in nursing homes. In 1980, the new senior apartment complex, Menwa, was offered book service.

Using the figures from the 1990 census for the four census tracts including Wadsworth and the surrounding areas, the population was 19,093. In 1990 the total number of people age 55-64 was 1,834 and age 65 plus was 2,786.[7] The 1996 census update shows an increased population which suggests that the Wadsworth Public Library is serving more than 4,620 adults age 55 and up.

The current outreach service for the Wadsworth Library includes these services: bookmobile, books by mail, home visits, drop collections at three nursing homes, five

senior apartment complexes and the community hospital; and provision of talking books for the sight impaired. The library has continued to develop its large print book and books on tape collections. Wadsworth Public Library prides itself on community service and has been striving to improve its services in all areas. A study of its outreach service has never been done, and a survey would be a way to show where improvements or changes are necessary and where service is strong and should be continued and strengthened.

There are three objectives of this study: to raise awareness of the Wadsworth Public Library's outreach service to older adults, to ascertain which services are being used the most and the least, and to find out what type of services are needed and wanted by the older adults in addition to what is offered now.

This study will be limited to the residents of Wadsworth and the surrounding community who live in the nursing homes and the senior apartment complexes, those who are patrons of The Senior Center, and those who receive home delivery of library resources. Therefore, the findings will apply only to the older adult population in Wadsworth, Ohio and the immediate surrounding areas.

For the purpose of this study, older adults will be defined as persons aged fifty five and over. "Outreach Service" refers to those services provided by the Wadsworth Public Library outside the Library building.

CHAPTER 2

LITERATURE REVIEW

The whole concept of serving older adults has been a low priority in the library world. In the early seventies there was a beginning awareness of the need for library service to the them. The research literature began in the early 1970s and increased in the 1980s and 1990s. Two categories were explored in the area of library services to the older adults: library services provided inside and outside the library and the reading and information needs of the older adult.

Library Services Provided Inside and Outside the Library

The sentiment of the literature is that throughout the history of libraries, library service to the seniors has been weak. Interest was increased with the publishing of a national survey of library services to the aging conducted by the Cleveland Public Library in 1971 and 1972. The study was conducted in two phases, the first phase determined the scope of library service rendered to persons over 65 by public libraries and libraries at state and federal institutions.[8] The conclusions revealed that more time, money, emphasis, status, personnel training, and planning needed to be given to the programs for older adults in public, national and state libraries. The second phase looked at the state of programs and services to the aging by public libraries and found that less than two percent of the aging in the United States were estimated to have received specific library service from public libraries, and less than twenty percent of public libraries were estimated to provide specific programs or services for the aging.[9]

About the same time, a student of library science, John Waddicor, conducted a study of library service provided in Class I Intermediate Skilled Nursing and

Convalescent Homes in Rhode Island. Waddicor examined the attitudes of ten librarians offering service, ten librarians not offering service, nursing home administrators and nurses or occupational therapists in ten homes with service, and 10 homes without service. All responses were positive except for five administrators whose homes were not offering service. Their responses varied from negative to indifferent: 1)"Only a few people would use the books"; 2) Relatives bring what books they want."; 3) "I'd try it. About five would read books. They are lazy, see."; 4) "Anything that would interest any of my residents would be of an interest to me, as long as I am not responsible for any lost books."[10] Waddicor concluded that there were three obstacles to the general idea of library service in nursing homes:

> The first is a lack of awareness on the part of many librarians that so many of the patients are desirous of and in need of the service. The second is that nursing home personnel are unaware that service to private institutions is within the proper domain of the public library. The third and greatest obstacle to library service is a fear on the part of administrators of nursing homes that they would be held responsible for lost books.[11]

Several of those surveyed said that services had not been offered in their facilities because they had just not thought of it. The results of this study were heartening. In January 1971, seven public libraries in the area studied served eighty-two actual reading patients in fourteen class I skilled nursing homes, and by January 1995, eleven public libraries served 397 actual reading patients in forty-four Class I Skilled nursing homes. This was a 450% increase over 1971.[12]

Again in a nursing home setting, in 1975 Margaret Monroe from the University of Wisconsin conducted a two part study that is "both a descriptive study of the physical and social climate of nursing homes for the use of print and other media and a study of public

library service to older adults and nursing home residents to provide a basis for design of more effective progress of service to the elderly.[13] Two surveys were distributed - one to nursing home personnel which was designed to explore the physical facilities, the social climate for the use of print and media and the readiness of nursing home staff and volunteers to support the use of those materials and the second to the public library which was designed to describe library service to the nursing home residents in the context of the libraries' total program of services to older adults. Some of the results of the survey for nursing home personnel were: 1) Reading and the use of books were a regular activity of approximately one third of the nursing home residents as estimated by nursing home directors and staff. 2) Books were a significant aspect of the lifestyle of perhaps 15% to 20% of residents who read books at least three times a week or had others read to them. 3) Magazines and newspapers are read by 35% of residents. 4) While radio and television sets are usually available to residents and are widely used, fewer than 25% of the residents have control over the selection of what they view and hear because selective use of media is enabled by ownership of the radios or television sets.[14]

The results of the survey of public library services to nursing homes demonstrated that: 1) services to nursing homes is a major thrust with 71% of Wisconsin public libraries providing such services and 50% of nursing homes in the state receiving such service. 2) Large print books and periodicals, talking books, homebound delivery, film loans, and deposit collections are the major forms of service adapted to older adults by Wisconsin public libraries. 3) Services to older adults and especially to nursing homes has been a major impetus to cooperative community planning for a significant percent

(16% - 35%) of Wisconsin public libraries. 4) About one half of the public libraries have a specific structure for service to older adults.[15]

Even though the results of the Rhode Island and Wisconsin nursing home studies were good , when Turock, in 1984, decided to replicate the Cleveland studies of 1971 and 1972 and "to identify, describe, and compare the extent and variety of current services with those in 1971,[16] it was disappointing to find that little progress had been made. Although limited progress was made in service, there was little evidence that the growth was in keeping with the growth in the size of the elderly population. The results of this update of 1984 are remarkably similar to those of the national survey conducted in 1971:

1. About 70% of the public libraries, nominated for their exemplary service to older adults, give a lower priority to program development for elders than for other groups in the population.
2. Funds for services to older adults constitute slightly more than 1 percent of the budgets of these public libraries.
3. Staffing constitutes less than 2 percent of the available work force.
4. On the average, 4 percent of the nation's elderly are reached by library service, as defined by the study.
5. The majority of public libraries have older adult volunteers and employees, although the proportion of the latter is decreasing.
6. About two-thirds work with other community agencies in the aging network.
7. Services to older adults are not generally considered distinct program entities, and there is no administrative structure for their overall coordination.[17]

Gradually, studies began to develop in the individual states gathering information about what services the local libraries had for older adults. In 1988, Diane Thompson surveyed the public libraries in North Carolina with the purpose of providing information about older adults which could aid library administrators in North Carolina to evaluate current services and to plan for future programs and services. Thompson summarized results of two other major surveys, *1971 National Survey of Library Services to the Aging*

and *Services for the Elderly in the Illinois Public Libraries, 1981* to include in her present survey. She concluded that: 1) Public libraries in North Carolina are providing more services to older adults than the National 1971 Survey or the Illinois 1981 survey even though there were differences in surveying procedures. 2) There is a trend of increasing services to older adults in the areas of extension, special materials, and information and referral.. 3) Service in the area of programming increased from 1971, remained constant from 1981 through 1986, and is an area that generally needs more attention. 4) Libraries that were large had more professional and nonprofessional staff members, more operating expenses, and more total volumes, provided more services than medium or small libraries in North Carolina.[18]

Ling-nam Leo Ip wrote a dissertation on library service to older adults in Pennsylvania and conducted a survey in 1989. Sixty-six percent of the libraries reported having appointed staff members for older adult services, but, on the other hand, only 9% had trained librarians doing those services. Only 5 % of the libraries actually had a policy statement concerning services to the older adults, and only 28% of the libraries had initiated programs and projects for this segment of the population. Few of the libraries received financial help from the state and local government. However, 94% of the libraries provided facilities and equipment especially for older adults.[19]

In the 1990s other research was conducted in Ohio by Darlene Fegen, Rachel Hartman and Judy Nablo. In 1990 Darlene Fegen wrote a master's research paper on older adult services in Northeastern Ohio public libraries and conducted a study to determine the level of public library service given to those over age 64 in the seven Ohio

counties which make up the Northeastern Ohio Library Association (NOLA). This study was based on the assumption that the needs and requirements of older adults ought not be submerged by being grouped into adult services. Several areas were analyzed, three of which were library staff attitudes, information and resources and service for all older adults. In the area of library staff attitudes, survey results showed that enhancing skills in working with older adults is encouraged by 13% of the libraries by providing staff workshops or seminars and 30% of staff members have participated in continuing education outside their own library to add to these skills.[20] There was an extremely wide divergence of viewpoints when libraries were asked to rank possible barriers to older adult services. While seven libraries marked as the most significant obstacle a lack of interest by seniors, seven marked it as fifth in significance.[21] Six libraries selected lack of funds as the most significant barrier, and four viewed lack of funds as least significant.[22] In the area of information and resources results show that 87% of the libraries have in their collections materials to assist older adults as well as family members, social workers, nurses, and other possible advocates of the aging, in understanding the aging process and, as a whole, collection development that supports the many information needs of older adults is a real strength of the libraries surveyed.[23] In the area of service for all older adults the results were again positive. Outreach is being employed by 90% of the libraries surveyed, 70% employ home delivery, and 53% provide deposit collections. Bookmobiles are run by 17% of the libraries surveyed.[24]

When Rachel Hartman conducted her study in 1995 on public library service to older adults in Northeast Ohio, she found similar, although not exactly, the same conclusions as Ling-nam Leo IP in Pennsylvania. As in Pennsylvania, older adult services librarians were available in only about one fourth of the libraries, and specialized programming for the older adults was available in about one half of the libraries. The libraries did a good job of providing and maintaining the materials and services that have existed for several years, but new services such as TDDs, special programming and specific older adult services staff needed to be improved.[25]

Also in 1995, Judy Nablo, in her master's research project which surveyed the public libraries of Ohio regarding their services for adults aged 65 and older, found:

> The most frequently reported extension service is homebound services. Large print books are considered the most common special resourcers and lectures are the most common group activities. Information and referral is the most frequently reported special service. Most libraries cooperate with other community organizations. Older adult services received low priority in most libraries although many libraries employed older adults and utilized them as volunteers. Results of this study were similar to those reported by national surveys done in the past.[26]

Nablo states , "But before there is any radical improvement in services to older adults there will need to be a change in perception, understandings, and imaginations of librarians".[27]

Reading and Information Needs of the Older Adult

The discussion so far has been on what library services were available to older adults since 1971. Other studies began to surface concerning the reading needs of the

older adult. In 1981 Celia Hales decided that the national studies which had been conducted did not focus specifically on the means by which information needs of the aging should be met. She used a research technique called a Delphi study, and submitted the following open-ended question to a panel of experts in the field of gerontology and library information services, "How should the information needs of the aging be met?" The experts were from four groups: 1) library/information specialists who had achieved a reputation of working with the aging: 2) educators/researchers in gerontology; 3) policy-level administrators who were part of the governmental hierarchy in aging at the state and regional level; and 4) service providers at the level of the area agency on aging. The conclusions, with minor variations in the different career groups, were 1) Informational needs were best met by better transportation, interagency outreach programs, more one-to-one contact through existing structures, and better training for workers with the aged; 2) Library/information professionals were not perceived by the other three subgroups as important sources of information for the aging; 3) and library programming was considered largely irrelevant. Computerization was recognized as an important contribution to informational needs only by library/information professionals. The conclusions relating only to the libraries were mentioned here.[28]

Because the Pittsburgh area had an unusually high percentage of older adults, Luster and Woolridge decided to do their research into the reading needs of older adults at senior citizen centers there in the early 1990s. They concluded from their research that reading was an important activity for these older adults as 74% read every day. Current events interested 56%, and 53% were interested in health and fitness.. Subscriptions to

magazines or newspapers were held by 53%. Respondents (51%) reported that they liked to get their information by reading, but it was disturbing to find that 38% did not use the library at all. Two of the top services they wanted from the library were outreach services - programs at the centers and reading material delivered to the centers.[29]

A couple of years later, in 1995, Jane Varley conducted a similar survey in an Ohio independent living complex. She found that reading was important throughout all age groups of the elderly, but it peaked in the 80 - 89 year old group. More interest in book talks was found among residents who lived alone - more interest in audio books among women than men. Results were cross-tabulated with the respondent's age group, living arrangements, gender, occupation and education. She found that there is no particular relationship between occupation or educational levels and time spent reading.[30]

Again in Ohio, in 1996 Suzanne Gourlie conducted a study of the reading interests of older adult public library users in Oakwood Ohio as part of her research for her master's research paper. The results of this study are based on seventy completed surveys which were completed by adults age 50 or over. A majority of readers indicated a preference for standard print over large type, although women showed a stronger interest in large print with increasing age. Unlike previous studies, the survey results indicated the large print collection is used by those of all ages, and is not of interest only among seniors. Collection management of large print may need to reflect the interests of all ages, while the needs of older adults should be a priority in the development and promotion of both the regular and large print collections.[31]

There was no study or research found that addressed the issue of outreach services for the older adults exclusively. That subject has been touched on only briefly in conjunction with other studies. Although the study being proposed here will survey only one public library in Ohio, it is a start. There is a need for other studies in this area, especially in light of the poor history of the libraries' attention to the older adult population.

CHAPTER 3

METHODOLOGY

This study was conducted using a self-administered questionnaire. The subjects for the study were the residents of one nursing home, four apartment complexes for seniors, one assisted living complex, one senior center and any patrons already receiving home delivery book service from the outreach librarian at Wadsworth Public Library. The approximate size of this population was 350. A minimum return expected was 75 responses.

The questionnaires were sent by mail to two government sponsored apartment complexes and were given out by the managers of the other two apartment complexes and the assisted living facility. The administrator of the nursing homes distributed the questionnaires to each person who was well enough to respond. The outreach librarian and her volunteers delivered the questionnaires to those patrons who receive home delivery, and a stamped, self-addressed envelope was provided for them to return the completed questionnaire by mail. Labeled and secure containers were put in the lobby of each older adult facility to collect the completed questionnaires. The researcher delivered questionnaires to and collected them from the Senior Center. All questionnaires were accompanied by an envelope in which the completed questionnaire was to be sealed before putting in the collection containers. At the end of the second week after the distribution of the questionnaires, a notice was put on the collection containers at the senior citizen apartment complexes and administrators of the other facilities were called to remind those who had not completed and turned in their form to

do so. After three weeks the data collection phase of this research was considered complete.

The questionnaire covered five areas: 1) limited personal data; 2) which of the Wadsworth Public Library's outreach services are used; 3) the types of literature that the respondents prefer; 4) evaluation of the bookmobile service and outreach staff; 5) suggestions for future improvements or additions to the outreach service.

ANALYSIS

Three hundred and seventy-five questionnaires were distributed, 18% (68) of which were completed and usable. The remaining questionnaires were either not returned, were not filled out sufficiently or were completed by people outside the age group 55 -75 years and over. Only one response came from the assisted living center. The administrator who distributed the forms said that the people just did not want to complete them. In retrospect, better results may have been achieved by sending the questionnaires through the mail. Questionnaires were placed in the Senior Center, but only one response was retrieved. The administrator reported that the older adults who came there for activities did not consider themselves older adults in need of outreach services because they could come to the public library to meet their library needs.

Respondents

The respondents are described by using three categories; gender, age and living accommodations Respondents were overwhelmingly female and a majority were over 75 and living in senior citizen apartments. Completed surveys indicate that the age breakdown is 12 % age 55 -65 years, 34% age 65 - 75 years and 54% age 75 years and older. (Table 1) Females represent 84 % of the total respondents, and males represent 16%. (Table 2) Senior apartment complexes house 72 % of the respondents and this is by far the largest percentage. Nursing homes house 13 %, and 15% live in their own homes. (Table 3)

TABLE 1

Age Distribution of Respondents

Age	no.	%
55 - 65	8	12%
65 - 75	23	34%
Over 75	37	54%
Totals	68	100%

TABLE 2

Gender of Respondents

Gender	no.	%
Female	57	84%
Male	11	16%
Totals	68	100%

TABLE 3

Type of Housing

Housing	no.	%
Apartment	49	72%
Own Home	10	15%
Nursing Home	9	13%
Totals	68	100%

Reading Interests

In general, women tended to prefer fiction and men non-fiction although the preferences were not dramatic. (Table 4) The reading interests present no great surprises except in the area of fiction for the males where the top four choices include romance 19%. The remaining top choices for fiction are western fiction 29%, mystery 29% and historical fiction 19%. (Table 5) In the non-fiction category the top four male choices are travel 24%, biography 12%, fine arts 12% and a tie for history, philosophy and religion and medical. 10%. (Table 6)

The females' top four choices in the fiction category are romance 27%, mystery 26%, historical fiction 23% and western fiction 9%. (Table 7) The non-fiction female top choices are biography 20%, history 18 %, travel 16 % and medical at 11%. (Table 8)

While the top fiction choices for both men and women included the same genres, the order of importance was different. Women put romance first and western fiction last, and the men put western fiction and mystery first and romance last. In the non-fiction area, both men and women chose travel, biography and medical in the top choices; however, the men chose travel as their first choice and that was 12 percentage points over their second choice. The preferences of the women were separated by only a small percentage.

The older adults like to use several different formats when seeking pleasure or information. Large print books are used the most by our respondents 26%, regular print books next 24%, videos 20%, magazines 10%, music recordings 10% and books on tape 9%. (Table 9)

TABLE 4

Literature Preferences

Type	MALE	%	Female	%
Fiction	8	42%	24	55%
Non-Fiction	11	58%	20	45%
Totals	19	100%	44	100%

TABLE 5

Male Preferences-Type of Fiction

Type	f	%
Mystery	6	29%
Western Fiction	6	29%
Historical Fiction	4	19%
Romance	4	19%
Science Fiction	1	5%
Fantasy	0	0%
Horror	0	0%
Totals	21	100%

TABLE 6

Male Preferences-Types of Non-Fiction

Type	f	%
Travel	10	24%
Biography	5	12%
Fine Arts	5	12%
History	4	10%
Philosophy and Religion	4	10%
Medical	4	10%
Cooking and Homemaking	3	7%
Business	2	5%
Computer	2	5%
Flowers and Gardening	2	5%
Totals	41	100%

Use of Outreach Services

The survey explored which outreach services have been used in the last two months by the respondents. There were a total of 36 services used with the apartment drop at 32%, home delivery at 27 % and the nursing home drop at 16 % etc. (Table 10) What was noteworthy was that one third of the respondents did not use the services in the last two months, and seven respondents noted on their questionnaires that they had not heard of the outreach services.

Bookmobile and the OVAL books by mail service were explored in more detail. The survey revealed that 80% of the respondents did not know about OVAL, 2% found it difficult to use while 7% found it convenient to use. There were five respondents that thought the service offered good selections and one thought the service offered bad selections. (Table 11) This is a service that the library is reevaluating.

The Wadsworth Public Library has two bookmobiles that give service to the elementary schools and to the community in general. The questionnaire revealed that 40 respondents (57%) had never visited the bookmobile, but 34% felt it should be a continuing service. Only 5% felt it was an unnecessary service. (Table 12)

When asked how the respondents learned about the library's outreach services, they answered that their sources were friends 56%, the library newsletter 31.%, the newspaper 3% and other 9% which included family. (Table 13)

Outreach Staff

There are six staff members assigned to the outreach department at the Wadsworth Public Library, four of whom are on the bookmobiles and one who handles the home visitations and books drops with the help of a few volunteers. The respondents' reactions

to the questions regarding the outreach staff were overwhelmingly positive. (Table 14) There were no negative comments. The outreach staff was considered friendly 39%, helpful 34% and knowledgeable 28%. There were 0% responses to unfriendly and unwilling to help. This is a strong point for promoting outreach services.

Future Interests

The study also explored the respondent's interest in future outreach services. It is difficult to say if the small percent of respondents (24%) who answered this question is due to disinterest or to lack of knowledge of the services offered. The most interest expressed was in increased outreach visits 41%. These were requested by apartment dwellers and those who reside in a nursing home. Books talks 23% also generated interest in both the apartment dwellers and the nursing home residents. There was a small interest in speakers 9% and reference service 9%. (Table 15)

TABLE 7

Female Preferences-Type of Fiction

Type	f	%
Romance	34	27%
Mystery	33	26%
Historical Fiction	29	23%
Western Fiction	11	9%
Fantasy	7	6%
Science Fiction	6	5%
Horror	5	4%
Totals	125	100%

23

TABLE 8

Female Preferences-Types of Non-Fiction

Type	f	%
Biography	33	20%
History	30	18%
Travel	27	16%
Medical	18	11%
Cooking and Homemaking	16	10%
Flowers and Gardening	15	9%
Fine Arts	11	7%
Philosophy and Religion	9	5%
Business	4	2%
Computer	1	1%
Totals	164	100%

TABLE 9

Library Resources Used

Type	f	%
Lg. Print Books	25	26%
Reg. Print Books	23	24%
Videos	19	20%
Music Recordings	10	10%
Magazines	10	10%
Books on Tape	9	9%
Totals	96	100%

TABLE 10

Outreach Services Used in Last Two Months

Type	f	%
Apartment Drop	12	32%
Home Delivery	10	27%
Nursing Home Drop	6	16%
Talking Machines	4	11%
OVAL	3	8%
Bookmobile	1	3%
Hopsital Drop	1	3%
Totals	37	100%

TABLE 11

OVAL Books by Mail

Response	f	%
Don't know about	45	80%
Good selections	5	9%
Convenient to use	4	7%
Difficult to use	1	2%
Bad selections	1	2%
Totals	56	100%

TABLE 12

Bookmobile

Response	f	%
Never visited	40	57%
Continue	24	34%
Unnecessary	4	6%
Other	2	3%
Totals	70	100%

TABLE 13

Communication

Response	f	%
Friends	18	56%
Library Newsletter	10	31%
Newspaper	1	3%
Other	3	9%
Totals	32	100%

TABLE 14

Outreach Staff

Response	f	%
Friendly	47	39%
Helpful	41	34%
Knowledgeable	34	28%
Unfriendly	0	0%
Unwilling	0	0%
Other	0	0%
Totals	122	100%

TABLE 15

Future Interest

Response	f	%
More visits by outreach staff	9	41%
Book Talks	5	23%
Bifocal Kits	3	14%
Speakers	2	9%
Reference Service	2	9%
Other	1	5%
Totals	22	100%

SUMMARY

The participation in the survey was 18% of the possible number. This was lower than expected. Those living in the senior apartment complexes provided 86% of the questionnaire answers, those who reside in a nursing home provided 13 % and the assisted living facility only 1%. There is a question that 68 responses can be representative of the older adults in Wadsworth. However, their responses are important in that they were the ones who were willing to assess their library.

With only a couple of surprises the reading preferences of the respondents were expected: 1) The top fiction preferences for women are romance 27%, mystery 26% and historical fiction 23%. 2) The top non-fiction preferences for women are biography 20%, history 18% and travel 16%. 3) The top fiction preferences for men are western fiction 29%, mystery 29% and historical fiction and romance 19%. The romance was a surprise. 4) The top non-fiction preferences for men are travel 24%, fine arts 12% and biography 12%.

Outreach services at the Wadsworth Library pull their adult materials from the library's general collection and drop approximately 320 items at the various senior complexes each month. Therefore, those who order items should be aware of the male and female preferences and of the difference in the numbers of males and females that receive the service in order to have the correct selection of books, videos and cassettes available to go out to the older adults receiving outreach services, as well as the older adults who are able to come into the library to make their own selections. It would be wise to consider the older adult in regard to collection development because the numbers are going to continue to grow. The staff who choose the books etc. to deliver to the

senior complexes must also be very aware of the preferences and the gender of the older adults that will use the selections in order to keep up interest and enthusiasm.

The book drops at the apartment complexes and nursing homes and home delivery are the two most popular outreach services used during the last two months. Questions about the OVAL or books by mail service revealed that 80% had no idea what this service was, and 57% of the responses indicated that the bookmobile had never been visited. The OVAL program does not originate in the Wadsworth Library. It is encouraging that the Wadsworth Library is considering organizing its own books by mail program where the library would have control over the selections and promotion of the service.

Having bookmobile stops at the senior apartment complexes should be considered. During the collection of the surveys, one apartment manager asked about the possibility of this and requested the name of someone at the library to contact. Each administrator of the apartment complexes should be contacted about this possibility, and a meeting of the administrators and library outreach personnel could foresee problems areas that could be solved before a trial run is attempted.

Most of the awareness of the outreach services of Wadsworth Public Library has come from friends 56%, followed by the library newsletter 31% and then the newspaper 3%. It is evident that word of mouth accomplishes more than the written word for the older adults, therefore, it is evident that the proper words need to be advertised. The words "Outreach Services" need to be seen inside the library. Information about the services for the older adults needs to be on fliers or bookmarks that can be taken home and/or given to friends. The library newsletter could develop a section specifically for

the older adults and the services available for them to use. The communication between public libraries and the public would be a good area for further research.

The outreach staff of the Wadsworth Public Library, which consists of 6 women plus a few volunteers, was rated highly on being friendly, helpful and knowledgeable in that order. There were no negative responses.

Only one fourth of the respondents commented on the outreach services that they would like the Wadsworth Public Library to offer in the future. The most interest expressed was for increased outreach visits 41%, followed by books talks 23%, speakers 9% and reference service 9%. The low percentage of responses to future services may be for several reasons: 1) Unknown services were presented. 2) The question involved too much thought. 3) This question was near the end of the survey, and respondents were tired of answering questions. 4) The future is not an issue. In order to educate the older adults about the services that might be offered in the future, a program could be held at each complex and the services could be demonstrated. This could be combined with a program highlighting the services already available, perhaps an entertaining book talk could be included. Good communication is a necessity in reaching the older adults who could benefit from the library's outreach services.

APPENDIX

re: Outreach Services to Older Adults from the Wadsworth Public Library

September 1, 1997

Dear Wadsworth citizen:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. In order to fulfill the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about the use of outreach services to older adults from the Wadsworth Public Library. The enclosed questionnaire, when completed, will help to determine how the Wadsworth Public Library can better serve the older adult population in Wadsworth with its outreach service. Outreach service is defined as all services provided by the Wadsworth Public Library outside of the library building.

Your confidentiality and anonymity are assured as you do not need to sign your name and the researcher will be the only one to read the completed questionnaires. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose to not participate in this study or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. Your cooperation is needed to complete this project; however, your participation is voluntary. When you have completed the questionnaire please put it in the envelope provided, seal the envelope, and put it in the container in your lobby marked "Library Research Project."

If you have any further questions pleas
e contact me, at (330)336-3749 or Richard Rubin, Ph.d., my research advisor, at (330)672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact M. Thomas Jones, Ph.d. at (330)672-2851.

Thank you so much for you cooperation; it is appreciated very much.

Sincerely,

Barbara Black
Graduate Student

re: Outreach Services to Older Adults from the Wadsworth Public Library

May 20, 1998

Dear Wadsworth citizen:

I am a graduate student in the School of Library and Information Science at Kent State University. In order to fulfill the requirements for my master's degree I am conducting a study about the use of outreach services to older adults from the Wadsworth Public Library. The enclosed questionnaire, when completed, will help to determine how the Wadsworth Public Library can better serve the older adult population in Wadsworth with its outreach service. Outreach service is defined as all services provided by the Wadsworth Public Library outside of the library building.

Your confidentiality and anonymity are assured as you do not need to sign your name and the researcher will be the only one to read the completed qauestionnaires. There is no penalty of any kind if you should choose to not participate in this study or if you would withdraw from participation at any time. Your cooperation is needed to complete this project; however, your participation is voluntary. When you have completed the questionnaire please put it in the enclosed stamped, self-addressed envelope and put it in your mailbox.

If you have any further questions, please contact me, at (330)336-3749 or Richard Rubin, Ph.d., my research advisor, at (330)672-2782. If you have any further questions regarding research at Kent State University you may contact M. Thomas Jones, Ph.d. at (330)672-2851.

Thank you so much for your cooperation; it is appreciated very much.

Sincerely,

Barbara Black
Graduate Student

LIBRARY AND INFORMATION SCIENCE STUDENT SURVEY

1. In the last 2 months, which of these outreach services from the library have you used? (Check all that apply.)

_____Bookmobile
_____Home delivery service
_____Talking machines
_____Library materials dropped off at the senior apartments
_____Library materials dropped off at the nursing homes
_____Books ordered from OVAL (Books by mail)
_____Books delivered to the hospital

2. Why do you use the library's outreach services? (Check all that apply.)

_____I have no transportation.
_____It is convenient.
_____I am unable to get to the library because of a physical disability.
_____Other_____

3. How did you learn about the library's outreach services? (Check all that apply.)

_____Friends
_____Library Newsletter
_____Newspaper
_____Other_____

4. Which of these do you use? (Check all that apply.)

_____Regular print books
_____Large Print books
_____Videos
_____Books on tape
_____Magazines
_____Music recordings

5. Do you like to read or listen to: (Check all that apply.)

_____Fiction
_____Non-fiction

6. What type of fiction do you like to read or listen to? (Check all that apply.)

_____Romance
_____Historical romance
_____Fantasy
_____Science fiction
_____Western fiction
_____Mystery
_____Horror

7. What type of non-fiction do you like to read or listen to: (Check all that apply.)

_____History
_____Biography
_____Travel
_____Cooking and homemaking topics
_____Business
_____Computer
_____Philosophy and religion
_____Medical
_____flowers and gardening
_____Fine arts (including music)

8. What do you think about the OVAL (books by mail) service? (Check all that apply.)

_____I don't know about it.
_____I find it difficult to use.
_____I find it convenient to use.
_____I like the selection of books offered.
_____I do not like the selection of books offered.

9. The Wadsworth Library owns two bookmobiles on which library materials, services and programs are offered at community stops, daycare centers and elementary schools. What is your opinion of the bookmobile service? (Check all that apply.)

_____I have never visited one of the bookmobiles.
_____I would like to see bookmobile service continued.
_____Bookmobiles are an unnecessary service for our community
_____Other_____

10. The library outreach staff is: (Check all that apply.)

_____Friendly
_____Helpful
_____Knowledgeable
_____Unfriendly
_____Unwilling to get me the materials I need
_____Other_____

11. I would be interested in: (Check all that apply.)

_____More frequent visits by the outreach staff
_____Bifocal Kits (Slide shows)
_____Book Talks
_____Speakers
_____Reference Service
_____Other_____

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12. My age is:

_____55 - 65
_____65 - 75
_____over 75

13. I am:

_____Female
_____Male

14. I live in:

_____My own home
_____In a nursing home
_____In an apartment
_____In a condominium

Thank you for your co-operation. If you have any other comments or suggestions to improve our outreach services to you, please write them on the back of this page.

END NOTES

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26 Judy Nablo, "Ohio Public Library Services to Older Adults," (Masters Research Paper, Kent State university, 1995), text-fiche, Eric ED401920.

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28 Celia Hales, "How Should the Information Needs of the Aging be Met? A Delphi Response," The Gerontologist 25 (Feb. 1985): 172 & 176.

29 Laurie S. Anderson, Louveller Luster, Pearl Woolridge, "Reading Needs of Older Adults: A Survey," Wilson Library Bulletin 67 (Nov. 1992): 41 & 44.

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